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ABSTRACT

Designed for use as supplementary instructional material in a cultural anthropology course, this learning module traces the history of psychological anthropology, introducing various schools and perspectives within the field of psychology. First, a discussion is provided of biological determinism, examining its historical development and the extreme interpretations of the biological perspective popular in Germany following World War I. Next, physiological psychology is explained in terms of its focus on the brain and nervous system, electrical models of brain functioning, biofeedback, and chemical models of behavior. The next section looks at the contributions of Sigmund Freud, describing his theories of id, ego, and superego; oral, anal, phallic, latency, and genital stages; and the oedipal and electra complexes. The work of Carl Gustav Jung is considered next, with focus on his theories of the collective unconscious and archetypes. The final sections provide an overview of gestalt psychology as championed by Dr. Fritz Perls, which examines behavior from a wholistic perspective; and behaviorism as understood from the work of Ivan Pavlov and B. F. Skinner. Performance activities related to the module are included. (LAL)

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Psychological Anthropology

A Modular Approach

Cultural Anthropology
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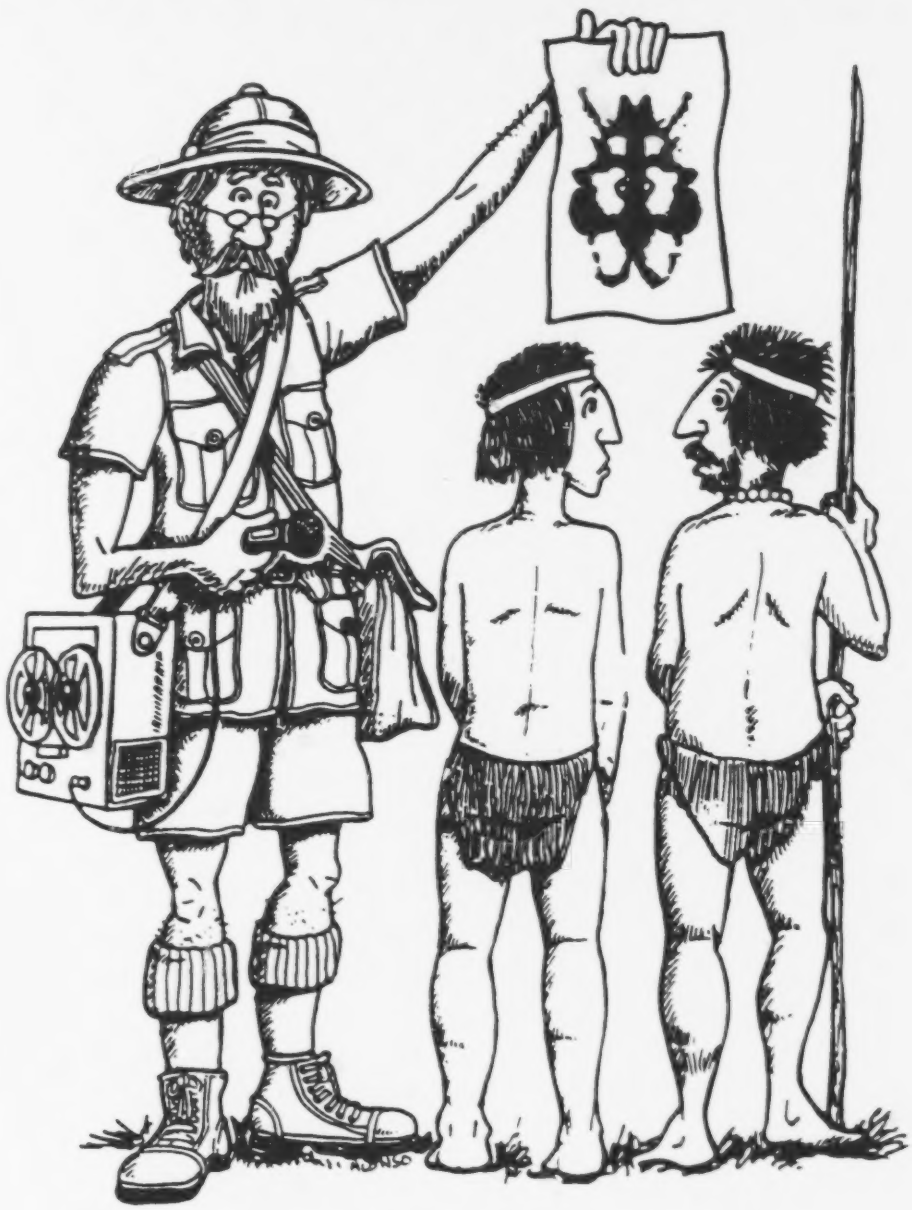
PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY



Introduction:

This module has been prepared as a guide to a specific area within Cultural Anthropology. Your task will be to read the materials, perform the tasks at the end of the module, and to cross check your answers with the information in the module upon completion of the performance activities. It will be your responsibility to keep up with the reading assignments in the textbook, and to take lecture notes, and film notes.

The module is designed to give you a basis for mastering a specific amount of information, and has been field tested with over 1000 students who have demonstrated by their performance on examinations, that the modular approach works. The theoretical perspective which is employed is based upon cognitive psychology, gestalt psychology, behaviorism and programmed learning.

This particular module was designed to introduce some historical background relative to psychological anthropology. The module contains numerous references to theoreticians and subfields within psychology. Students in a variety of academic disciplines should become acquainted with many of the points of information contained in this module.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY is an attempt to link the theoretical constructs of psychology with the cross cultural approach of anthropology. Psychological anthropology embraces diverse schools and perspectives within the field of psychology; this intermingling of various psychological concepts and insights has evoked severe criticism from many social scientists.

Biological Determinism

Throughout recorded history, attempts have been made to explain individual and group behavior. The vast majority of studies or approaches which linked behavior with biology and culture were invalid. During the last century, serious research relating to social biology has been hampered by a residue of ill will toward any theory which attempted to link behavior with biology.

During the 19th Century, various researchers attempted to devise a scientific model of human behavior. In their eagerness to approximate the role of scientists such researchers frequently confused measurement with scientific methodology. Explanations of behavior based upon indices of physical traits became commonplace within physical anthropology. Indeed, the measurement of the head and its relative ratio of length to width became a hallmark of physical anthropology.

Anthropologists collected samples of body measurements, and correlated the data with individual and group behavior. A typical example would be the assertion that physical data on the Bushmen of the Kalahari would provide a possible explanation for their unique cultural adaptation. A scholar who wished to demonstrate scientific skills would offer cephalic indices as a probable explanation for the uniqueness of the Bushmen culture. Social and biological Darwinism were based upon the supposed link between biology and behavior. Measurements fascinated not only anthropologists,

but also psychologists and sociologists.

Criminal behavior and deviant behavior were studied from the same perspective. Genetic theories of deviation and criminality were based upon studies of family records and physical measurements compiled from the inmates of various prisons. Interestingly, most of these studies did not include measurements and comparisons of the normal population with those who were labeled criminals. Scholars compiled indices and sought correlations between criminality and specific physical traits. Significant lack of understanding about culture and its role is evident in the early writings of biological determinists.

Biological determinists explained that the less complex cultures of the world were composed of people who were biologically inferior. When intelligence testing was developed, some biological determinists were attracted to this method of ascertaining the average intelligence of a given population. Unfortunately, few were aware of the cross-cultural bias of intelligence tests. They attempted to find correlations between varying levels of cultural complexity and performance on intelligence tests. The result was reams of data based upon faulty testing. Eventually, most anthropologists came to the conclusion that intelligence tests measure the degree of enculturation to the norms inherent in the test, and not intelligence.

Most explanations of behavior tend to be based on a belief that only one particular view of the world is valid. Conflicts between various approaches arise when proponents advocate their own theoretical perspectives and refuse to acknowledge other possibilities. Psychological anthropology borrows ideas from various schools of psychology and attempts to explain behavior in both less complex and technologically advanced societies.

The evidence from physical anthropology supports the contention that human beings are unique as a species. Our physiological traits set us apart even from other primates. However, the range of intelligence among human populations that experience relatively normal conditions, (i.e. populations that have adequate diet, shelter, and other traits required for normal functioning) remains relatively uniform. There is no evidence to support the contention that one racial or cultural group is innately

more or less intelligent than other groups.

Most people have heard the term HUMAN NATURE; it is generally used to indicate that a propensity for certain behavior is genetic. The language of many cultures contains descriptive phrases which allege that behavior is transmitted through heredity. Terms such as "bad blood" or "born evil" are relatively common. All imply that behavior is transmitted via family, biological or group connections. The folk wisdom of many societies contains descriptions of people based upon ethnocentric observations which are couched in physical or biological traits. Perhaps the most frequent misuse of this perspective involves racial stereotypes, in which behavior patterns are linked to specific physical types.

Biological determinists are extreme in their view, arguing that culture plays no role in determining behavior, because behavior is nothing more than a collection of traits attached to specific genes.

Historically, within some political contexts it was useful to create stereotypes based upon "scientific" evidence. Non-Western cultures were described as childlike, and their peoples as biologically incapable of dealing with a complex world. Descriptions of cultural shock and conflict were twisted to illustrate that colonialized people couldn't distinguish between good and evil. Biological rationalizations were used by many colonial powers to justify their expansion and control of Third World areas.

Extreme, ideologized interpretations of the biological perspective became popular in Germany following World War I. A sub-field of racial anthropology was developed which explained behavior from a racial and biological perspective. Simply stated, the theory advocated the elimination of all people who had traits which were defined as negative by political authorities, who cited scientific theories and used spurious data to justify their argument. Western scientists did not actively condemn this perspective in time to prevent devastating genocide.

Within Nazi Germany, a specialized institute for the study of racial and biological anthropology produced studies based upon the ideological requirements of the government. Experiments were conducted upon human populations, and many killings were done under the guise of science and research. Infamous scientists such as Dr. Mengele sent living and deceased

human specimens to the center. Reaction to the excesses of the Nazi era and its distorted biologically deterministic theories caused many in the scientific community to avoid research into a possible link between behavior and biology.

After World War II, another aspect of psychology (anthropology) developed. Animal behavior studies were closely linked to both anthropology and ethology. Studies of rats, mice, wolves, wild dogs and numerous non-human primates were conducted. Anthropologists generally confined themselves to mammals or primates, although a few ventured to study other life forms. Ethologists are basically biological determinists. Their goal is to ascertain the core of traits which are common to all species. From a cross-species perspective, ethologists examine the lock and key relationship between biology and behavior.

Physiological Psychology

19th Century anthropologists who utilized physical measuring techniques became aware that the brain and the nervous system are the key elements in our ability to function. They noted, for instance, that when brain damage occurred certain changes in behavior resulted. Experimentation was initiated- portions of animal brains were removed or rendered inoperative. The behavior of these animals was recorded and compared with normal animals. Maps of the brain were created.

World War I spurred expansion of research into brain functioning. Large numbers of head injuries were observed, and gross predictions were formulated based upon long term studies, and the application of previous animal studies to human brain damage. For a time most research in physiological psychology was concentrated on mapping brain functions and related traits. Physiological psychologists working with physicians invented the lobotomy. The lobotomy was based upon primitive maps of the brain. It was used to control the behavior of mental patients. Lobotomies kill brain cells through excising or trauma. Most lobotomies were ethically unsupportable. If a patient survived such an operation, the result was a docile, confused and frequently retarded individual.

Anthropologists assisted in acquiring data for research in physiolog -

ical psychology by collecting non-human and primate brains and casts while conducting field research. As complex information about brain physiology was developed, specialized technology for studying brain function also increased. Studies were conducted on the relationship of diet, trace elements and other outside influences to neurological functioning. Endocrinologists examined the production of hormones to ascertain their chemical influences upon brain function.

Chemistry was used to create drugs capable of controlling or altering brain function in specific and measurable ways. The majority of drugs which were developed were used to control behavior, as contrasted to understanding it. Some areas of physiological psychology are based upon chemical models or explanations of behavior.

Preceding the chemical models, but eventually paralleling them, were the ELECTRICAL MODELS of brain function. Knowledge that the body contains an electrical/chemical system accompanied some of the initial experiments with electricity. A number of experimenters sought to explain brain function and behavior as an electrical system. When electrical current from the brain was measured, gradiations were observed. Some scientists felt that some forms of behavior could be changed by the application of electrical energy to the brain. Electro-convulsive "therapy" developed from this theory. This method involves shocking a person into convulsions, thereby erasing troublesome memories. Today, brainwaves are also being studied through an area identified as BIOFEEDBACK. This approach utilizes advanced technology to monitor the brain and nervous system. Research in this field involves both chemical and electrical systems, and attempts to understand the manner in which all elements combine.

Anthropologists draw from all areas of physiological psychology. Physical anthropologists, by the very nature of their discipline, are well equipped to understand various kinds of physiological research. As a consequence those areas of psychological anthropology which draw upon physiological models are dominated by physical rather than cultural anthropologists.

Biological determinism is currently being investigated in research related to psychology, biology, ethnology and physical anthropology.

However. contemporary biological determinist theory is not as narrow as it once was. Almost all biological models now give credence to culture and learned behavior as the key elements of individual and group behavior.

Sigmund Freud

During the latter part of the 19th Century, physicians and psychologists developed models to explain the behavior patterns of patients. One of the major researchers in psychiatry and psychoanalysis was Sigmund Freud. Freud was trained initially as a physician; he noted that many of his patients appeared to be suffering from non-medical problems. As a consequence, he postulated a complex model of behavior based upon stages of maturation and the integral manner in which sexuality influences the formation of personality, as well as with the effect of emotional trauma and its role/placement in the subconscious of an individual. In any Freudian explanation of behavior, three areas of energy were generally believed to be operating:

> The ID is the biological focus of a person, the biological energy which causes the individual to strive for gratification. The individual tends to be unaware of the actual cause of the striving for gratification. Freud considered the ID as innate.
>
> The EGO is developed thru experience and learning. As an individual develops an awareness of different means of gratification, and experiences both success and failure, the EGO is formed. When the young infant perceives external sources for gratification, an EGO emerges.
>
> The SUPEREGO serves as the control factor; with it an individual is able to integrate in a positive fashion the demands of the ID and the variety of satisfaction demands of the EGO. According to Freudians, those with little or no SUPEREGO development have little or no control over their impulses.

To Freudians, specific stages of emotional development are keys to understanding the overall degree of well being of the individual. The LIBIDO or psychic energy of an individual is directed toward specific maturation stages during the developmental process. Each stage requires different sets of behavior.

1. ORAL STAGE - Age - 1 year
   Concerned with sucking and biting.
2. ANAL STAGE - Age - 2-3 years
   Centered on toilet training and the regulation of elimination.
3. PHALLIC STAGE - Age - 4-6 years

Attraction to parent of opposite sex.

4. LATENCY PERIOD - Age - 6-14 years
   No activity - dormant
5. GENITAL STAGE - Age - 14 years +

According to Freudian theory, if one does not go through each of the stages, or becomes fixated on a particular stage, an unhealthy personality will result. Freudian therapy seeks to have a patient retrace difficulties with maturation stages and to work through them with the help of the therapist.

Freudian therapists work closely with their clients by establishing themselves as replacement authority figures. Most Freudians listen passively and allow patients to unburden themselves of a variety of real and imagined traumas. In many cases a patient who goes through Freudian analysis exhibits traits which Freudians are trained to find. Perhaps the therapist's role fosters these responses. This is related to the expectations of the patient and the therapist. After widespread publicity informed the public of Freudian traits, the validity of this approach was reduced.

Several of Freud's theories were advanced as cultural universals. The OEDIPAL COMPLEX and the ELECTRA COMPLEX are two of his more famous creations. The Oedipal Complex explains the process of sexual development, focusing and transference as it relates to male children and their parental interactions. Freud felt that a young male focuses his sexual drive toward his mother. This creates a situation in which the father becomes a rival. The young male later transfers his sexual attraction or attachment from the mother to other women. Freud cited case histories and the classic tale of Oedipus as the basis for his claim that this process is a cultural universal.

The Electra Complex is almost identical in that the young female focuses her sexual attraction toward her father and views her mother as a rival. She eventually transfers this attraction to other males. Freud added an additional component. He suggested that young girls were subjected to an additional shock by the eventual discovery that they did not have a penis. This is an interesting aspect; it explains more about Freud and his perception of the importance of his own genitals than it does about female

maturation. Freudians believe that some females develop what is termed PENIS ENVY. In an extreme variation of this syndrome, they argued that some females are so upset about the lack of a penis that they strike back at males. These women symbolically attempt to dominate men; they are termed CASTRATING FEMALES. The Oedipal and Electra complexes are interesting. However, most anthropologists dismiss their validity.

Freud saw sexuality in everything; his emphasis on the importance of this drive was highly significant. He became somewhat fixated upon the importance of sexuality and was inflexible in acknowledging other theoretical perspectives. The anthropological literature of the 19th Century was full of descriptions relating to sexual rituals which were used to ensure the well-being of crops, people and the world. He was influenced by anthrcpological materials, but was not able to see the cultural limitations of many of his theories. Psychological anthropology incorporated and emphasized Freudian theories from 1930 until the early 1950's.

Jungian Perspectives

Another pioneer in the study of personality was Carl Gustav Jung. Like Freud, Jung was a 19th Century scholar who sought to explain behavior. His approach was a response to the Freudian perspective in that it included much more than a sexual focus. According to Jung, the psyche or mind consisted of three levels. The most visible is the CONSCIOUS. The PERSONAL UNCONSCIOUS is the next level, in which experiences, wishes, impulses and other memories are stored; experiences in the personal unconscious can be revealed by therapy. The deepest part of the system rests upon the COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS, in which the traits of past generations, including primitive ancestors, are stored. In this regard Jung embraced a theory of the evolutionary development of the mind; this approach is similar to that of Telhard de Chardin, the noted Jesuit philosopher.

ARCHETYPE is the term Jung coined to describe the traits which are shared in the collective unconscious. The four principal archetypes which Jung identified as human universals are the PERSONA, ANIMA, ANIMUS, and the SHADOW. He considered the persona as the exterior role which an individual uses; it does not always correspond to his/her actual personality. The archetypes anima and animus refer to the masculine and feminine side of

men and women. The anima is the feminine side of men, while the animus is the masculine side of women. Lastly, the shadow is the area which contains primitive desires. The shadow is deemed to be responsible for things that are labeled as reprehensible. It contains the darker side of one's personality.

The unconscious is not without a unifying force - that force is the SELF; symbolically, the representation of that unifying force is the circle. Jung considered it the universal symbol for the complete person. Jung did fieldwork in a variety of settings; he stated that his research contained evidence to support cross cultural or SYMBOLIC ARCHTYPES. Most contemporary anthropologists remain skeptical of Jung's cross cultural universals of symbolism. However, in relation to masculine and feminine, Asian cultures use Yin and Yang in the same fashion as Jung's anima and animus. The theory of a collective unconscious might be Jung's greatest legacy. It is not accepted by anthropologists. Evidence from socio-biology is starting to show a possibility that some traits might be shared and transmitted through heredity. If this is proven, then his "collective unconscious" will have been vindicated.

Freudian and Jungian psychology are criticized by Gestaltists as being too concerned with individual traits. Gestaltists point out that many researchers focus upon elements which are too narrow to allow an accurate perception of the larger psychological whole. However, they concede that it is sometimes difficult to perceive the larger entity, particularly when dealing with human behavior.

Gestalt Psychology

Another approach to the study of personality which developed in the early part of the 20th Century emphasized the objective recording of behavior. GESTALT PSYCHOLOGY examines behavior from a wholistic perspective; individual traits are part of a larger entity. Gestalt theories initially were developed as a reaction to Freudian psychology. Gestaltists focus on what is termed the "unity of perception". Gestalt psychology also incorporates theories about learning processes. According to the wholistic Gestalt approach, to facilitate learning one must see the relationship between various bits and pieces of data. Dr. Fritz Perls is recognized as one

of the leading practitioners of Gestalt therapy.

A parallel exists between the philosophical positions and the perspectives of phenomenology and cultural anthropology. All are attempts to increase understanding of behavior by examining the whole or complete system or entity. The Gestalt perspective has also indirectly influenced psychological anthropology.

Behaviorism

Perhaps the most important contemporary school of psychology within the United States, behaviorism arose as a direct response to Freudian, Jungian, and Gestalt-centered explanations of behavior. Early pioneers in behaviorism regarded many popular conceptual approaches as meaningless. Terms such as consciousness and mind were felt to be too general to be of value to scientific perspectives.

The goal of science is to describe and predict. Much of early 20th Century psychology was concerned with introspection. The role of the observer/therapist was less than scientific. Gradually, the work of animal psychologists began to be applied to the study of human behavior. A great reliance upon observation and inference developed via research into animal psychology. Animals could not talk, they could not experience regression, nor could they relate meaningful experiences. Animal psychology reduced behavior to its simplest traits. These traits were built upon what was later termed LEARNED BEHAVIOR.

Behaviorists developed techniques to study stimulus response components. From behaviorist studies, the realization evolved that a complex system of reinforcements exists for both humans and animals.

One of the most famous 20th Century researchers was Ivan Pavlov. He demonstrated a correlation between specific types of conditioned cues and specific types of associated or learned responses. Almost all introductory students learn about Pavlov's experiments with dogs, and their association of the ringing of a bell with feeding.

B.F. Skinner carried Pavlov's experiments to a more sophisticated level. He created situations wherein the animals being studied had to solve a problem. In such situations, complex learning, rather than simple

association, occurs.

Behaviorism is a methodological explanation of behavior and personality formation. It is the basis for the viewpoint within cultural anthropology that behavior is learned, and that one becomes a member of a culture on the basis of learning, rather than from biologically or genetically transmitted information.

As research in psychological anthropology burgeoned during and after World War II, under goverment and academic sponsorship, the influence of behaviorists increased in direct proportion to the decline of the psychoanalytic schools within anthropology.

During the Second World War the social sciences, particularly sociology, psychology and anthropology, received considerable logistical help and research subsidization. The governments of many countries perceived that information about human behavior could be useful for political and combat purposes. This attention and sanction created a deluge of research.

Prior to the War, national character studies had been assigned a low priority. War increased governmental interest in gathering information on cross-cultural diversity, and determining why and how different people and cultural groups respond in unique ways to the same stimuli. Projections of national character were formulated using interviews with prisoners of war and refugees, and projective analyses of the art and literature of various cultures. It was hoped that this data would enable governmental authorities to psychologically anticipate the probable movements and strategies of their opponents. A micro-application developed wherein the personal biographies of selected leaders were compiled and crossmatched with national character studies. It was hoped that this newer form of intelligence could be applied during major battles to predict or manipulate the actions of individual field commanders.

Performance Activities

Please fill in the blanks:

1. B_____ Determinists tend to emphasize genetic background over enculturation.

2. Some forms of biological determinism served as a basis for ideologies based upon r_____ prejudice.

3. P_____psychology was based in part upon animal studies and served to counter some of the theories generated by Freudians and others.

4. S_____F_____was a noted psychologist (psychiatrist) who generated a number of theories relative to socialization and sequential stages of maturation.

5. The Oedipal C_____is not thought of as a cultural universal within anthropology.

6. The E_____Complex is an example of a theory which is not regarded with much attention today.

7. J_____believed in the concept of the collective U_____.

8. S_____ A_____ played a role in Jung's approach.

9. G_____psychology emphasizes the element of a whole, or a pattern.

10. P_____is generally associated with the concept of early research into learned behavior.

11. B.F. _____ is perhaps the best known author within psychology today, his view point emphasizes a behavioristic approach.

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